

## MY ISLAND IS ONE BIG AMERICAN FOOTNOTE

*Michael Lujan Bevacqua*

Guam, Where America's Day Begins!!!<sup>1,2,3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> **Life in the colonies, the borderlands, the territories sucks.**

Sucks like nationally strategic words and verbs used to keep my ethnicity selfishly un-determined

It sucks like cluster / mustard bombs buried in your land or landing on your head.

It sucks like carefully crafted, beautifully bound footnotes that no one bothers to read or quote.

My island is one big American footnote,

Sitting black / brown as day on the bottom of every red whitewashed and blue page

Through textual treaties or wars these narrow margins are our new, now, old or eternal homes.

Whether we liked it or not (Wanted it or not) our bloods were mixed with colonially supplied inks and our lives recast, set typed and dyed woven into tyrannical threads of foreign flags that call us to war with familiar terms of friendliness, unity, warmth, love of life, yet that same textual flag will blind a budget, or an international summit to our superfluous "footnoted" needs.

Footnotes? Small islands of text really,

Off the margins, somewhere between margins of national importance we sit there, ideologically spaced / almost erased like far-flung chick-peas etched / embossed on these pages of strategic seas by a constitutional, conscious and colonial disease,

Colonial *dis-ease*.

We cannot be incorporated for insane and inconsistent reasons

A hundred years ago it was because our skins were different.

Then it became because we spoke different languages

Or our lack of rights and liberties was integral to military strategy,

Now it is because we would receive too much power if we became a fair and equal part of the union.

We are the territorial thoughts that are too precious to let go, but not precious enough to bring into the fold.

Not critical enough to really think on, and not real enough to think critically about.

Welcome to the footnotes, like the foothills of some forever inferior land.

Because when you look up upon the wealth of words, verbs, periods, commas and paragraphs of the text, their completeness of thought, their unlimited potential, their self-referential existence (while yours seems so conditional,

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contextual, so dependent on the text) their ability to endlessly reference their "glory"

You realize that in this world, In This text

It is not hard to believe there is something inferior about inhabiting this tiny footnote.

And thus we exist always trying to live up to the sprawling, overwhelming example of the text. Its structure, its syntax, its semantics are all implanted in our tiny notes.

Alas, we are nothing but footnotes. Barely quotes.

We are the crap between America's political toes that no one knows or cares about.

The exceptions and imperfections are excesses that don't really belong in this "glorious" document of democracy and freedom.

In the case of Guam

Our existence uncontroversially and uncontrollably questions established "truths" about the espoused equality of the text's democracy, its unfreeing military strategy of freedom, and its supposed support for human rights.

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<sup>2</sup> **See, a footnote always poses a question, or supplies an answer**

Is an excess or an extra thought,

Always articulates something that just doesn't fit into the regular text

So what does my footnote do?

Among other things it calls for American people to reconcile their proud to be not colonial not imperial existence with the fact that what they keep off their margins of layouts/maps/discourse proves blatantly that they are.

My island footnote is an uncontroversial example, but other militaryranical tramlings around other texts, in dozens of languages all make the same point.

American style democracy is really just American sovereignty

Anywhere on the page and anyplace in this world.

The discourse on domination, on control, on sociopolitical subjugation local, foreign and domestic is coded into each line of text just as much as liberty, equality and justice seem to be.

Why can't this "great text" see that with their very apathy, with their disinterest, their notorious anti-human patriotism, they allow their text to create genocide, allow their text to abuse human rights, to deny human rights?

For me to hear people believe in the pieties of American benevolence or grandeur is like watching snow fall slowly back up into the sky, or bombs being dropped up, sliding and imploding back into the planes that birthed them.

It is supposed to be unbelievable, but how then can so many people believe it?

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<sup>3</sup> **But back to my footnotes that don't and I quote "fit in" with the flow of the text.**

Since we don't fit, since there isn't room for us on the flag, or in the Capitol, let us go I say!

Release us to flutter beyond these American borders and margins!

Leave us to determine self-fully! A text of our own!

But no, that would never do the Congressional chorus calls back

And they are right, as national (in) securities will always intercede and strategic reasoning will sweep us politely to the bottom of any flag/budget/page, but push us unknowingly to the forefront of any imperial activities.

Speaking of which, should the son or daughter of a footnote die on a field of battle, distant or far, and the eulogy can be politically profitably—the flag is stripped from its perpetual half mast posture on the book's spine and placed, draped into patriotic pose over the footnote's footsoldier's fallen casket. But a soldier, fallen out of a footnote, absorbed into the field of the text at the last second is an unknown soldier nonetheless.

With no voice, no space other than silent cries to flag stained states of the textual union, the makeshifting of this patriot only obscures where in the hell he came from.

*But I'll tell you where he came from. He came from my tiny island, and he went to war without a vote! Without a voice! Without so much as a space or place in that big book of apple pie American wonderfulness! But now after his passing words will be shed of how his death and sacrifice were not in vain, but what could be more full of uselessness than words of regret which have no effect? All the words sacrificed or laid before the altar of freedom, equality and justice mean nothing if they do not produce, protect or pursue freedom, equality or justice.*

Such is the fate of those unfairly placed in the fringes

And it is that cruelly formalized fate that guides my frustrated fingers daily into silent and dissident prayer.

That God please help the footnotes

Because if the book whose constitution is supposed to be built upon freedom, liberty, democracy won't liberate, elevate or make its own footnotes, then who will?